

Teaching Module: NCLB – “Talking Points” About Parent Involvement in Schools

Overview

There are four principles woven throughout every aspect of the NCLB Act.

- Accountability for results
- Emphasis on using research-based instruction
- Expanded local control and flexibility
- Expanded parental options

Objective:

At the completion of this module, students will:

- Understand the parent involvement requirements as outlined in the NCLB Act
- Know rights and responsibilities of parents as outlined in the NCLB Act
- Know what teachers must do in order to meet the requirements of NCLB

Materials / Handouts

- NCLB “Talking Points” About Parent Involvement in Schools
- NCLB – Parents Rights and Responsibilities
- NCLB – Fatal flaws and what if? (Small group discussion)

Introduction

Now in its seventh full school year of implementation, NCLB has been drawing praise and blame. It has been praised for its **goals** of increasing all students’ learning. It has been criticized for overemphasizing the importance of standardized achievement tests, setting unrealistic time lines for clearly unreachable **goals**, and under-funding its requirements. The law also includes important requirements for schools, districts, and states to organize programs of parental **involvement** and to communicate with parents and the public about students’ achievement and the quality of schools. In contrast to some other sections of the law, Section 1118-- Parental **Involvement**-- identifies structures and processes that are needed to develop programs to involve all families in their children’s education.

Activity

- Small group discussion – “Talking Points” About Parent Involvement in Schools
- NCLB – Parents Rights and Responsibilities - Small group analysis of parent’s rights and responsibilities impact on the classroom teacher
- NCLB – Fatal flaws and what if?

Closure

- Students will discuss any concerns about parent’s rights and responsibilities
- Instructor will clarify and summarize any questions or misunderstandings about the lesson

Reflection:

- What was the most effective part of the lesson?
- What part of this lesson had the most impact on students?
- Were the objectives adequately covered?

Information for this teaching module adapted from the following sources:

- Policy Guidance Documents on the No Child Left Behind Act – Title 1
www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/finrule/2002-4/120202a.html
- Rhode Island Parent Information Network www.ripin.org
- **Open to the Public: How Communities, Parents, and Students Assess the Impact of the "No Child Left Behind Act," 2004-2007--"The Realities Left Behind".** Mary Stanik. *Public Education Network*
www.publiceducation.org/nclb_main/2007_NCLB

NCLB – “Talking Points” About Parent Involvement in Schools

NCLB Says

What it Means

What Teachers Can Do...

Each school district receiving money under Title 1 of **NCLB** must submit a parent involvement plan developed in consultation with all stake holders, including parents

The Plan...

Addresses how the individual school will promote the social, emotional, and academic growth of each student

Develops Title 1 services to include meaningful parental involvement policies and school practices that lead to increased student achievement

Ask to be a part of the process to create the plan to ensure that it meets the needs of your students

Begin the conversation within your school around strategies for parent involvement that will improve academic achievement

Section 1111 and 1118 are two of the most critical parent involvement provisions of **NCLB**

Parents are required to be part of the discussion concerning how schools will help all children meet state academic and performance standards

Schools are required to support and strengthen home/school partnerships

Schools must build and increase parental involvement programs

Schools must coordinate parent involvement activities with other federal programs such as Even Start, Head Start, Early Reading First, and more

Ask to be a part of the process of educating parents about academic standards, assessments, and student achievement requirements

Assist schools in making sure information is parent friendly, clear, and in the form of the most likely questions and answers

Support efforts to communicate in language(s) that families can understand

NCLB Says	What it Means	What Teachers Can Do...
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Every Title 1 School, in collaboration with parents of Title 1 children, must develop compacts describing school and parent responsibilities for student learning

A compact is a written agreement between the teacher and parent to improve a student's academic success

All parents of Title 1 students are required to sign compacts

Compacts are most effective when teachers are able to explain to the parent:

- Academic expectations of the child
- Strategies that will be used
- Child's abilities and academic needs
- How the parent can support their child

Support must be available from the school to help parents take responsibility for their part of the compact

Ask assistance from Nevada Department of Education: sample compacts, compliance with Title 1 and NCLB; and correctness with your union contract

Become part of the School Improvement Team

At the beginning of every school year, school districts receiving Title I funds *must notify* all parents of children attending Title I schools that they *may request* the following information about the qualifications of their child's teachers and paraprofessionals

Has the teacher met state qualifications and has a license for the grade level and subject?

Has the teacher an emergency or provisional license?

What degree does the teacher hold and in what field of discipline is their certification and degree?

If the child is being taught by a paraprofessional, what are their qualifications?

NOTE: Schools must notify parents if a child has been assigned to or has been taught by (for four or more consecutive weeks) a teacher who is not highly qualified.

Encourage placing the notice of where parents can find out if teachers are highly qualified in grocery stores, community locations, and on website

Put certificates and diplomas near classroom door or on bulletin board

Have photos of teachers along with qualifications and on-going education in central office, school office, and/or on website

Include information in student handbook

Encourage school districts to consider incentives for low-performing schools to hire highly qualified teachers

NCLB Says

What it Means

What Teachers Can Do...

The school district must provide parents with timely information on a child's achievement levels on state academic assessments

By the beginning of each school year, parents must receive results of assessments

In a language and format that parents will understand

Send home report cards with students or via mail and include a reply postcard to learn if report was received and if parents have any questions.

Follow-up with a phone call if reply postcard not returned or parents have questions

Share and explain test scores at individual parent-teacher meetings or conferences

Write a plan with the help of parent and student that will support continuation of good work or to improve scores

Conduct meetings with all families about test and scores to create a sense of community at school around academic achievement

School districts are required to conduct an annual review of all schools within the district to determine whether they are making annual yearly progress (AYP) in academic achievement.

The findings must be given out to the whole community, in particular to parents.

The meaning of “needs improvement

Reasons for their child’s school as being identified as needing improvement

How the school will address the problem

Encourage having the annual report in the local newspaper, on the school phone system, or presented on local radio and cable television

Encourage district leaders to issue the reports on all schools simultaneously as a district-wide activity

Encourage district and/or school to partner with parents to improve school and student success

NCLB Says

What it Means

What Teachers Can Do...

Parents of children in a school that is not making adequate yearly progress must be offered options

School districts use assessment results to review all schools' progress

Title 1 schools that fail to meet AYP are identified for corrective action and placed in school improvement status

There is a timetable of interventions and consequences:

- Allowing students to transfer to higher performing schools with free transportation provided
- Offering outside supplemental services (tutoring, after-school programs, etc) for students who don't transfer
- Working with parents to develop a school improvement plan
- Requiring schools to spend at least 10% of their Title 1 monies to improve teaching quality
- Or establishing an alternative governance structure, which can include replacing the principals and/or staff, reopening a charter school, being turned over to a private management company, or being taken over by the state

Encourage district to create a brochure for every school to explain its programs, test scores, and plans for the future

Encourage district to use School Report Card to provide information on all schools in district

Help develop and conduct a "town hall" or community meetings in various locations at day and evening hours to explain school test scores and the choice options available to parents

Help create one-on-one meetings for parents with counselors or advisors to guide parents who want assistance in deciding about school choice

Present information to all parents about how the school plans to improve its programs and how families and the community will be involved in the improvement process

Encourage video taping of the presentation for parents about options so that parents who cannot attend will receive the information

Encourage school to implement parent-classroom visitation to help parents decide about school choice and supplemental services

Definition of **parental involvement** under NCLB

Participation of parents in a regular, two-way meaningful communication on the student's academic learning and/or other school activities

Involvement is to make certain that:

- Parents play a major role in assisting their child's learning
- Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education
- Parents are full partners in their child's education
- Parents are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their children

Create common format for reports and communication so that parents receive consistent information and messages from school

If all communication include a method for parent response that information was received (such as a reply postcard)

Seek grants to fund outreach activities (for example, home visiting) to develop communication with parents-particularly those that are usually not involved or are hard to reach

Develop methods to keep parents apprised of how their child is doing on a weekly basis or at the very least, monthly basis

Encourage parents' input, questions, comments, and concerns

Hold celebrations for students who reach required proficiency levels and invite parents

Help create bumper stickers for children who meet required proficiency levels or develop some other way to recognize achievements

Under No Child Left Behind Act It's Your Right to...

- *Know how well your child is doing in school*
- *Be involved in your child's education. NCLB Act expects you to help your child do better in school*
- *Help your school write a Home/School Compact that lists the shared responsibilities of parents, teachers, and students*
- *Know how your child's school is performing*
- *Know what choices or options you have for which school your child goes to, depending on how long their school has been "low-performing and not improving"*
- *Know if your child is eligible to receive supplemental services*
- *Receive information on Title I, school performance reports, state assessments, and to receive this information in language you can understand, to the extent possible*
- *Know your child's teachers' qualifications*

To Support Your Rights, It's Your Responsibility to...

- *Be involved in your child's education*
- *Get your child to school every day*
- *Get your child to school on time*
- *Be sure that your child completes all their homework every day*
- *Encourage your child to do his/her best*
- *Talk with you child's teachers about how your child is doing*
- *Go to parent teacher conferences*
- *Know who your child's friends are*
- *Partner with your child's teacher to help your child do their best in school*

Flaws in the NCLB Act could be that it has left crucial realities behind.

Reality:

- **NCLB has been imposed on a public school system that remains unequal**

Reality:

- **NCLB pays considerable lip service to parent involvement; in reality, parents and communities are almost shut out of the reform process**

What if ...

- **The Department of Education eliminated special-interest programs under the No Child Left Behind Act and, focused taxpayer funds on empowering parents and local schools to boost achievement?**
- **The rights and responsibility of parents to oversee the education and upbringing of their children were not key features in the No Child Left Behind Act?**

